

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL MEETING
OF MINISTERS ON FILM AND BOOKS

The National Film Board
An Authentically Canadian Cultural Vision

Federal

MONTREAL, Quebec

March 3-4, 1986

PLEASE NOTE

This document is made available by the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) for education and/or information purposes only. Any misuse of its contents is prohibited, nor can it be sold or otherwise used for commercial purposes. Reproduction of its contents for purposes other than education and/or information requires the prior authorization of the CICS.

INTRODUCTION

For film to develop and prosper in a country like Canada, it must be fully integrated into the Canadian cultural reality. It must be supported by a solid film industry and have access to domestic markets. It must benefit from the most advanced technologies and rely on the harmonization of federal and provincial policies and programs.

This document summarizes the National Film Board of Canada's contribution in this regard. It outlines the NFB's current production, distribution, training and research activities, and describes the nature and extent of its collaboration with private and public agencies in the provinces to achieve common goals.

I - A PUBLIC FILM PRODUCER SERVING CANADIAN SOCIETY

A. A Canadian Cultural Vision

As a public producer, the National Film Board offers an overall cultural vision which is expressed in coherent programs devoted to the production of wholly Canadian audio-visual materials, responding to the cultural and social values and interests of society as a whole.

This global cultural vision stems from the NFB's presence in all regions of Canada, its roots in the French- and English-speaking cultural communities, its close links with its viewers. It stems from its permanent staff of filmmakers, the resources allocated to research and film production, the freedom of expression and experimentation enjoyed by filmmakers, the extent and quality of its expression of Canadian culture, and the integration of creation, programming, production, marketing and distribution.

The primary mission of a public producer is to bring to Canadians an always growing vision of who they are and a deeper understanding of the values which shape this society. Canadians recognize the importance of the NFB's mission. Canadian governments have always allowed the NFB to fulfil this role without subjecting it to economic, political or ideological imperatives. This has always been a source of admiration and envy by other countries.

The Board's choices in programming are based essentially on criteria which respect social and cultural relevance and artistic quality. Its role is different from, and complements, that of private-sector producers, who are concerned, first and foremost, with profitability.

B. An Important Source of Canadian Content

Because of the number of original films it produces every year, the NFB ranks among the most important film producers in the world and is by far the most important source of Canadian content to which the provinces have access.

PRODUCTION OF ORIGINAL FILMS AND VIDEOS		
	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
English	78	80
French	34	23
Biligual, multilingual	5	21
Total	<u>117</u>	<u>124</u>

In addition to original films and videos, the NFB also produces multi-media packages, i.e., slides and filmstrips specifically designed as teaching aids in the schools.

PRODUCTION OF MULTI-MEDIA PACKAGES		
	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
English	21	21
French	3	3
Bilingual	10	17
Total	<u>34</u>	<u>41</u>

The Board also translates and adapts most of its original films in order to satisfy the needs of the English- and French-language markets and other linguistic groups in Canada.

VERSIONS AND ADAPTATIONS OF ORIGINAL FILMS AND VIDEOS		
	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
In English	10	19
In French	57	32
Foreign languages	15	7
Total	<u>82</u>	<u>58</u>

In addition to annual original production, versions and adaptations, the provinces have access to a permanent collection of some 4,000 titles, whose content and quality ensure their long-term relevance. According to a 1982 study of the NFB's network of film libraries, 44 percent of films loaned every year were produced more than 10 years ago.

C. Support for the Production of Canadian Content

The National Film Board not only produces films, but fosters the production of Canadian content. To this end, it undertakes programs and activities which respond to the film industry's needs.

1. Coproduction

Coproductions involving private- or public-sector partners are one means of increasing the number of productions, especially feature films or major series. In recent years, the National Film Board has undertaken coproductions with private and public agencies throughout Canada.

NUMBER OF COPRODUCTIONS		
	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
English films	7	17
French films	3	2
TOTAL	<u>10</u>	<u>19</u>

2. Technical and Artistic Support

Through its production offices, the NFB administers two film assistance programs, one for English-language production ("Programme to assist films and filmmakers in the private sector") and the other for French-language production ("Programme d'aide à la production artisanale"), designed to foster the emergence of new filmmakers, and to permit the production of certain films which would not otherwise be produced. Assistance is offered in the form of finishing, film, technical or artistic advice, equipment loans and so forth. The following table indicates the number of films for which the National Film Board has provided support during the past two years:

NUMBER OF PROJECTS BY PRODUCTION CENTRE		
	<u>1984-85</u>	<u>1985-86</u>
<u>PAFFS</u> (English-language production)		
Vancouver	6	10
Edmonton	3	5
Winnipeg	8	12
Toronto	51	49
Montréal	80	60
Halifax	7	11
TOTAL	<u>155</u>	<u>147</u>
<u>PAPA</u> (French-language production)		
Ontario	-	3
Québec	38	26
Atlantic	-	1
TOTAL	<u>38</u>	<u>30</u>

3. Development and Support for a New Programming Concept

With a view to offering young Canadians programming designed specifically for them, the NFB proposed the establishment of new cable services for children and youth. The project has been supported and developed by young people and numerous youth and family agencies across Canada.

This interest led to the establishment of Téléjeunesse Canada/Young Canada Television, a non-profit corporation in whose name an application to operate French-speaking and English-speaking services was submitted to the CRTC in April 1985. A hearing respecting the application is to take place by the summer of 1986. If it is accepted, Téléjeunesse Canada/Young Canada Television hopes to begin broadcasting in September 1987.

The corporation will sponsor or purchase virtually all of its productions in the private sector.

The NFB has provided financial support from the outset and will continue to do so until Téléjeunesse Canada/Young Canada Television obtains a licence and is able to continue on its own.

Two factors are of primary importance with respect to programming: the participation of young people and of representatives of all regions of Canada. The NFB, which is established throughout Canada, will assist in the organization of regional consultative committees and devise a practical, efficient model for such groups' participation in preparing the broad programming outlines.

Should this initiative materialize, it will create substantial production spinoff in the Canadian private sector by giving the latter access to an important new outlet for Canadian content.

D. Decentralization of Production

To better express the realities of Canada as a whole, several years ago, the English Programme Branch at the NFB expanded its facilities in Montréal to include production centres in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Halifax.

The following table indicates the budgets allocated to these centres during the past two years:

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRODUCTION CENTRE BUDGETS		
	<u>1984-85</u>	<u>1985-86</u>
	<u>\$000</u>	<u>\$000</u>
Vancouver	\$ 950	\$ 2,131
Edmonton	940	1,176
Winnipeg	944	1,776
Toronto	1,305	1,450
Montréal*	12,445	12,940
Halifax	990	1,195

The NFB's five-year Operational Plan** stipulates that, by 1990, the overall English-language production budget will be equally divided between the head office and regional centres.

The National Film Board is currently reorganizing French-language production in order to better serve French-speaking audiences. Over the past two years, the following budgets have been allocated to French-language production:

* Head office.

** "An Operational Plan presenting strategies for the production and distribution of films at the National Film Board of Canada, July 15, 1985".

FRENCH-LANGUAGE PRODUCTION BUDGETS		
	<u>1984-85</u>	<u>1985-86</u>
	\$000	\$000
Pacific	\$ 23	\$ 25
Prairies	500	77
Ontario	420	372
Québec	9,563	10,449
Atlantic	466	520

In its Montréal head office, the National Film Board maintains a core of permanent filmmakers and employs freelancers. Production in other centres is undertaken by freelancers. The NFB's goal is to have 70 percent of its films produced by freelance filmmakers and is very close to achieving this objective.

In several provinces, NFB production funds are an important source of income for filmmakers and technicians. Added to other government and private-sector funds, these funds make it possible to earn a living from filmmaking and develop individual talent.

For example, a Manitoba government report, prepared in 1983, showed that the National Film Board accounted for 42.2 percent of the total employment of freelance filmmakers in the province between 1978 and 1983.

II - A PUBLIC DISTRIBUTOR SPANNING THE COUNTRY

As a public distributor, the NFB is responsible for ensuring that its films reach their intended audiences and that they are available to all Canadians, regardless of where they live.

A. Marketing Films

The distribution of NFB films through various networks relies essentially on private and public distribution, broadcasting and exhibition agencies.

With respect to films intended for general audiences, the NFB use mass broadcasting systems such as the national television networks, commercial cinemas and video clubs.

However, most of its production is aimed at specific audiences. It generally uses provincial distribution, broadcasting and exhibition networks to reach these audiences.

The educational, social and cultural nature of NFB films fulfils the needs and interests of provincial agencies responsible for these sectors. The Board usually markets its products in collaboration with such agencies. For example, the NFB is currently launching a major series of films against the sexual abuse of children in collaboration with a number of provincial agencies concerned with the problem. Provincial youth protection and education departments, school boards, social service and health services networks and various children's aid societies or committees are working with the NFB to ensure the dissemination and proper use of the series, and appropriate follow-up.

During the past two years, the NFB has launched 213 original and translated films on English-language markets. To this end, it has allocated the following budgets in each province.

MARKETING BUDGETS: ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MARKETS		
	<u>1984-85</u> \$000	<u>1985-86</u> \$000
British Columbia and Yukon	416	400
Alberta and N.W.T.	121	145
Saskatchewan	91	139
Manitoba	419	258
Ontario	1,312	937
Québec	1,130	1,488
New Brunswick	76	29
Nova Scotia	396	303
Prince Edward Island	25	34
Newfoundland	76	72
TOTAL	4,062	3,805

During the same period, the NFB launched 172 original and translated films in French-language markets and allocated the following budgets for this purpose:

MARKETING BUDGETS: FRENCH-LANGUAGE MARKETS		
	<u>1984-85</u> \$000	<u>1985-86</u> \$000
West	131	77
Ontario	132	99
Québec	1,469	2,048
Atlantic	59	65
TOTAL	1,791	2,289

B. Distribution Networks

To ensure rational use of its distribution network and maximum access to its products, the NFB has undertaken to diversify and increase distribution outlets. On the basis of its long and fruitful cooperation with provincial distribution and broadcasting networks, the National Film Board intends to negotiate formal cooperation agreements in order to achieve their common goals.

1. The NFB's Basic Network

The NFB's network of film libraries is being transformed. The NFB plans to maintain an audio-visual centre in each province. The Centres will be linked to public or school film libraries with which the NFB has reached agreements to service the surrounding community.

This model already exists in Prince Edward Island where the NFB and the Charlottetown Media Centre have jointly served the province's residents since 1974.

In Thunder Bay, Ontario, the National Film Board has been associated with the North Western Regional Library System since 1972.

More recently in Québec, as a result of agreements to pool respective resources, the NFB has established itself in the offices of the Centre d'Études Universitaires d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue in Rouyn, the Chicoutimi sociocultural centre, the Rimouski city hall, and the Québec City central library.

Negotiations are currently underway, and others will be undertaken in the near future, with public educational agencies in the other provinces, and the Yukon and the Northwest Territories to increase outlets in the NFB's film distribution network. All such outlets will be linked by the FIBOS computerized reservation system and will make up the universally accessible basic network.

Of course, negotiations will take into account demographic differences and the distribution services of the various provinces. For example, an analysis of per capita film loans by region of Canada in 1982 showed the importance of the NFB film library system in the Atlantic provinces, where loans were five times greater than they were in Ontario. The following table indicates the number of loans by province, through NFB film libraries and associated libraries operating under contract.

LOANS BY PROVINCE	
	<u>1984-85</u>
British Columbia and Yukon	76,539
Alberta and Northwest Territories	61,067
Saskatchewan	40,263
Manitoba	39,066
Ontario	159,800
Québec	148,020
New Brunswick	25,837
Prince Edward Island	34,229
Nova Scotia	3,176
Newfoundland	19,995
Total	<u>607,992</u>

2. The Network of Public Libraries

Collaboration with the public library network has taken several forms: long-term deposits of part of the NFB film collection; sale of copies of films at a 50 percent discount; inter-film library loans and others. The high cost of acquiring and maintaining a collection of 16 mm films and the cost of operating a film library have always prevented the NFB and other Canadian film producers from exploiting the remarkable potential of this distribution network, which spans the country. The advent of the videocassette has altered this situation.

Last year, the "Video Biblio" pilot project was launched in Québec, in collaboration with several public libraries. The purpose of the experiment was to foster and initiate the implementation of a network of educational videocassette lending/rental outlets within the network of public libraries, thereby facilitating the development of a network to complement private video clubs, primarily through its Canadian educational content.

The proposed model for collaboration provides, in particular, for the free deposit by the NFB of a minimum number of titles in $\frac{1}{2}$ " VHS and BETA formats, in return for the libraries' promise to acquire a fixed number of audiovisual documents produced by the Canadian private sector.

In the light of the experiment's success, other projects are currently under way elsewhere in Canada, especially in Vancouver, where the NFB has granted reproduction rights on 200 titles to the network of public libraries. Films can therefore be offered to clients under the same conditions as books.

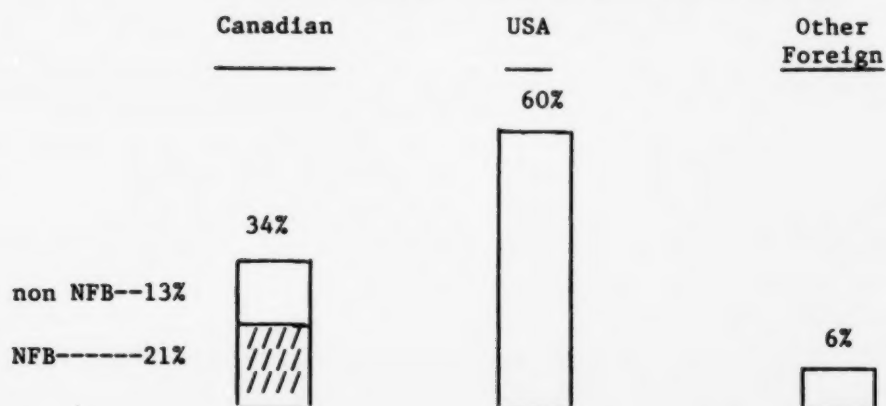
Our objective is to extend this type of collaboration to 4,000 libraries in Canada. We have already noted the positive effects of collaboration between the NFB and public libraries. In December 1985, loans and rentals of videocassettes in the Québec City public library alone, with which the NFB has signed an agreement, accounted for 67 percent of all videocassette loans and rentals in Canada as a whole.

3. The School System

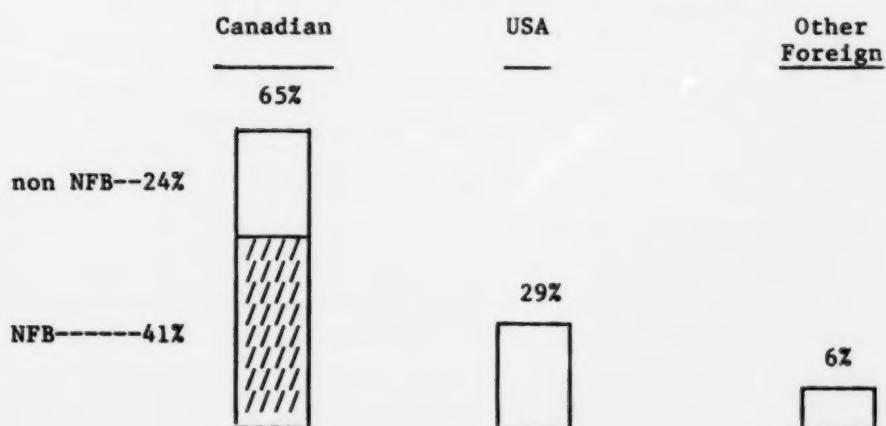
Given the educational nature of the NFB's films, the education system is its principal market. It is also a partner for distributing its films in the schools and, in many instances, in the community at large.

A study undertaken in 1975 by the NFB, in collaboration with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada showed that foreign content dominated school film libraries, despite Canadian educators' preference for Canadian material, as the following tables indicate:

Copies of 16 mm Films in School Libraries



Sources of 16 mm Films Used by Educators



While two thirds of the films available to educators 10 years ago were foreign, the 1,600 educators in the sample reported that they used Canadian films 65 percent of the time and foreign films 35 percent of the time. Ten years later, the EMPDAC* survey of the Canadian educational market indicates that the situation has scarcely improved. The share of revenue generated by the sale and rental of Canadian productions still only accounts for one third of total revenues on the educational market.

The National Film Board is attempting to further increase access to its products, especially by making it easier for educational institutions to acquire its films and distribute them through their own networks.

To this end, several measures have been adopted. These include a discount policy (30 percent to 45 percent) for group purchases of the most popular titles, and a policy covering electronic reproduction at \$3 a minute, making it possible to reproduce unlimited numbers of videocassettes for use in the school networks for three years. Moreover, the National Film Board makes more than 250,000 free loans to the schools. Overall, these measures entail considerable savings for provincial school systems.

The NFB also collaborates with the provincial educational television networks to have its productions included in the networks' programming. Since 1981, Knowledge Network in British Columbia has shown more than 1,375 NFB films. For the past three years it has also scheduled a program entitled "NFB Theatre" during prime time. Radio-Québec is broadcasting 90 NFB titles, purchased by the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, on a program entitled "Marché aux images". The NFB collaborates in a similar manner with TVOntario and Access Alberta.

* Education Media Producers and Distributors Association of Canada, 1985

To become more familiar with their needs and to promote the use of audiovisual productions in schools, the NFB organizes and participates in seminars, conferences and colloquia in the educational milieu throughout Canada.

C. Information System on Canadian Content

The NFB has put advances in information technology at the service of Canadian audiovisual products and developed a computerized information system on such products. (FORMAT)

Implementation of this national information system was begun at the end of the 1970s. FORMAT is designed to promote the use of Canadian audiovisual products by supplying up-to-date information, using printed catalogues and by a direct information location system.

A growing network of information suppliers, provides data for the FORMAT data bank. This network includes federal and provincial cultural agencies and private-sector producers and distributors.

The data is processed by UTLAS Inc. (University of Toronto Library Automated Systems), the most important Canadian bibliographic data bank, serving more than 2,000 public, school, university and specialized libraries across the country.

The FORMAT data bank currently contains more than 15,000 files and is growing constantly.

A number of widely-distributed media catalogues are produced by FORMAT, such as Film Canadiana (our national filmography). The public may also have direct access to this bilingual data bank through NFB audiovisual centres throughout Canada.

It is anticipated that other cultural institutions such as school media libraries, public libraries, government services and film archives will eventually have direct access to the data bank.

As a computerized data bank on national audiovisual resources, FORMAT represents a progressive model of positive interaction between technology and culture.

By linking a network of information suppliers and users from coast to coast, FORMAT supports the expression of a Canadian identity as it is found in a wide range of audiovisual creations.

III - TRAINING

The NFB provides various types of training to members of the film industry.

The following categories cover various types of training and training programs offered over the past two years.

A. Assistance Program for Independent Filmmakers

This program is designed to help train new filmmakers through technical and artistic support offered while they make their own films.

B. Productions Designed to Provide Training

The NFB undertakes certain projects with a view to providing training. Such projects may involve a competition through which a young filmmaker is offered the opportunity to make an animated or documentary film supervised and subsidized by the Board; or a series of short fiction films, based on a given theme to be produced by young filmmakers across Canada (Dramalab); or a program designed to initiate filmmakers to the production of videoclips.

C. Training Workshops

The NFB organizes film training workshops on a regular basis throughout Canada. Such workshops may be devoted to scriptwriting, directing, animation, camera work, picture or sound editing, film titles or other film techniques.

D. Seminars and Publications on Technological Developments

The NFB's technical services regularly organizes information seminars on the most recent technological innovations around the world. The Division also publishes summary reports on technological developments in communications and audiovisual productions.

E. Assistance for Filmmakers' Cooperatives

The NFB also provides grants to filmmakers' cooperatives. These grants help train young filmmakers through technical and artistic support for the production of their first films.

F. Training in the Use of Audiovisual Productions

NFB distribution agents throughout Canada organize training workshops for interested groups in schools and the community.

G. Training Courses

Every year, the National Film Board offers courses in various aspects of filmmaking to a number of trainees. Their training is integrated into regular production and post-production activities.

Several of these programs are offered in various provinces, while others are held at the head office. Participants come from all over the world. The following table indicates the funds which are allocated for such training in each province:

TRAINING BUDGETS BY PROVINCE		
	<u>1984-85</u>	<u>1985-86</u>
	\$000	\$000
British Columbia	\$ 80	\$ 153
Alberta	190	407
Saskatchewan	2	-
Manitoba	136	110
Ontario	177	143
Québec (head office)	1,782	3,584
New Brunswick	22	40
Nova Scotia	126	174
Prince Edward Island	3	3
Newfoundland	9	9
Total	<u>\$2,527</u>	<u>\$4,623</u>

IV - TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Canadian film industry cannot grow without significant investments in technological research and development. Film is not just intellectual creation and artistic expression; it also involves equipment and production and communications technologies. The development of filmmaking is closely linked to the development of technology. For example, recent developments arising from the integration of data processing and electronics have expanded the horizons of filmmakers. The film industry is using and developing highly advanced technologies which have applications not only in this sector but in other industrial sectors.

The National Film Board has a long tradition of excellence in the realm of innovation and experimentation in sound and picture technologies. This tradition is based on an integrated infrastructure which assures continuity and quality of research. Know-how has resulted from extensive experience in this field, and ongoing collaboration with private-sector equipment manufacturers, university research centres, government research institutes, and private sector production companies and laboratories.

The NFB operates a research and development centre in its technical and artistic operations division. It is responsible for serving the Board's filmmaking needs, and those of the film industry as a whole in fulfilling the following roles:

1° Conception and Development of Systems and Prototypes:

The research and development centre is currently working on: computer-assisted animation, robotized camera head and system for regulating movement for special effects in filming miniatures, stereophonic optical recording and reproduction, electronic card for sound mixing, Datatrack optical code reader, electronic film editing, high-definition television for special effects, interactive video and video discs.

- 2° Dissemination of information on the results of research and the development of new technologies around the world.

Production Branches have initiated and carried out several other programs and development projects related to filmmaking. For example, the French Programme Branch has established a computer animation centre devoted to developing digital techniques and processes which are increasing the Canadian animated film industry's productivity. The centre is attempting, first and foremost, to make its services available to all NFB production offices, through graphics terminals equipped with adequate peripherals and, subsequently, to the animation industry as a whole. The English Programme Branch has, in collaboration with IMAX Corporation in Toronto, developed a 3-D IMAX camera and has produced the first 3-D IMAX film, to be shown at Expo 86 in Vancouver.

This contribution to the industry as a whole will become increasingly important among the NFB's activities; already in 1985-1986, more than \$2,170,000 have been allocated to research and development.

APPENDIX I : EXPENDITURES BY PROVINCE

In order to put the NFB's financial contribution to provincial film industries into perspective, the following table compares the provinces' and the NFB's expenditures with respect to film.

	NFB Expenditures		Provinces'
	1985-86	1984-85	Expenditures 1983-84*
	\$000	\$000	\$000
British Columbia	\$ 3,136	1,947	358
Alberta	1,787	1,567	1,100
Saskatchewan	423	364	14
Manitoba	2,445	2,200	571
Ontario	3,835	4,108	874
Québec	49,580**	48,530**	7,864
New Brunswick	833	812	7
Nova Scotia	1,730	1,624	231
Prince Edward Island	37	28	59
Newfoundland	240	237	7

The foregoing figures do not take into account expenditures incurred in the provinces resulting from films shot locally but initiated in Head Office, or the purchase of equipment or rental of services from local companies for these productions.

* Source: Statistics Canada, most recent year available.

** NFB headquarters.

APPENDIX II : EMPLOYMENT BY PROVINCE IN 1984-1985

	<u>PERMANENT STAFF</u>	<u>FREELANCERS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
British Columbia and Yukon	22	204	226
Alberta and Northwest Territories	13	242	255
Saskatchewan	5	56	61
Manitoba	13	162	175
Ontario	57	628	685
Québec*	612	1,786	2,398
New Brunswick	7	66	73
Nova Scotia	18	102	120
Prince Edward Island	0	10	10
Newfoundland	4	16	20
Total	751	3,272	4,023

* NFB headquarters.